

IN THE FIRST PERSON

NEW YORKERS REACT

INSIDE THE APOCALYPSE

Joan Roney is a local writer and environmentalist. She works on saving rainforest trees from being turned into park benches by the city. On Tuesday morning, she raced downtown to see if she could help save victims of the air attacks on the World Trade Center. She brought gauze pads, medical tape, scissors, gloves, rubber bands, hydrogen peroxide and a Dr. Seuss book (Oh, The Places You'll Go) in case she was asked to read to the wounded.

Roney, 33, who had no prior medical experience, spent 24 hours inside the disaster zone before coming by the IMC at midday Wednesday to talk about the devastation she had witnessed.

"The media talks about a war zone and it was a frickin' sight to see. Tons of papers flying around with all kinds of stock figures. I saw resumes floating around [and] pieces of computers...



PETERHOLDERNES

New Yorkers gather to watch the tragedy unfold.

"The first woman I treated came down from the 87th floor [of the North Tower]. Her name was Mariana. She was from Stamford, Connecticut, and I hope she made it home OK. She had

bare feet and was bleeding on her legs and her hands, had scrapes all over and was extremely dazed. [She was] a 20-year old girl. I was amazed she had come from the 87th floor. By the time she came, the second building had collapsed. She was crying and I treated her. She was very freaked out thinking that people had stayed behind on the floor. They thought the best thing you can do is stay in one spot until they were told where to go. She said about a third of her floor stayed and she went down. As she was coming down, she said at the 60th or 50th floor there were all these firemen who were exhausted from carrying all that weight...

It was a fragile, feminine hand...
It had a wedding band on it.

"One of the firefighters had lost a couple of buddies. He was a very macho kind of guy. He pulled away from his friends and was crying. He said he hated New York. I asked him, 'why do you hate New York?' And he said, 'because of the traffic.' I told him maybe his people who were in the stairs were doing what they wanted to be doing...

"The last thing I saw before I left was a woman's hand which was connected to an entire body. It was a very fragile, feminine hand. It could have almost been a mannequin and it had a wedding band on it."

TO THE WORKERS OF WINDOWS ON THE WORLD

BY TONY PERLSTEIN

I represented workers from the top two floors of the World Trade Center. This is for any who may have perished. It is an acknowledgement that working people always suffer the costs of our leaders' misdeeds.

For a year I worked as the [union] representative for the 300 people who cut lettuce, baked tarts, broiled salmon, mixed drinks, washed dishes, waited tables and set up banquets on the top two floors of the World Trade Center. They were my comrades and friends in a struggle to make this a better world for all.

The workers at Windows on the World came from Bangladesh, Syria, Iran, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico, Cuba, Algeria, Ivory Coast... these are just a few of the countries that I can remember. I imagine that many of them were at work at 9 a.m. this morning. I used to visit the night shift as they left and the day shift as they arrived between 7 and 8.

This group of people taught me what it means to listen, to care and to struggle. I will not forget the day a dishwasher named Robert Williams hugged me with watery eyes and shouted, "We did it!" after 120 of his coworkers defended his job and stopped the abuse of a mean-spirited supervisor.

To my sisters and brothers at Windows, thank you for teaching me much about myself and about the world we live in. May our country have the courage to look at ourselves and our wrongs before we point the finger at others.

THE TERROR OF WAITING

BY JEN OWENS

I woke up later than usual to find that my boyfriend had already left for his 7 a.m. call time at Trinity Church, down in the Financial District at 1 Wall Street. He and several of my friends work television production on a church talk show filmed there for the Odyssey Channel.

I made the bed then checked my cell phone messages, there was one. My boyfriend had left me a short frantic message saying there had been a bomb in the World Trade Center, so the shoot was postponed. He said to page him when I woke up. I paged him, concerned with my headache and wondering why he had sounded so frantic.

He responded almost immediately. He was calling from just outside the WTC, looking up and he thought a plane had hit the towers. I thought he meant that it was an accident. He told me to go downstairs and turn on the TV. We hung up.

I couldn't get any reception, but I found a mutilated CBS feed. I watched and called a girlfriend. We talked on the phone as we watched. I stared at the images of the towers and watched as the building turned into smoke, which seemed to be rushing down and up at the same time. We both were shouting into the phone, and I could hear the newscasters and the newsroom behind them echoing that.

Thirty seconds later, I made the mental connection between the collapse and my boyfriend standing beneath it. I was quiet and my voice trembled as I spoke to my friend, she asked me if I was alright. I said that I was, but I had to get off the phone and page him again to see if he was alright.

I paged him, wanting to add exclamation points to the numbers somehow.

As I waited for him to return my call, I opened the door, wanting desperately to connect with anybody walking by, to tell them what had happened, as if that would take away some of my fear. It was quiet outside and really bright. People were walking by, at a normal pace as if they were going to work. I wanted to ask them if they knew the tower had collapsed, as if it had only happened to me personally. I needed to connect and to share this profound sense of grief that was rapidly overtaking me.

My mind played with the notion of what would happen if he never returned home. I couldn't fathom it and tried to retreat into Zen teachings: To experience the moment only and not concern myself with any other.

I tried to imagine life in a war zone and decided that what I was experiencing was just a drop in the hat of the suffering that most of the countries, which would soon be

under suspicion, live with every day. I worried about the inevitable backlash against Palestine.

I watched the footage replay again in shock. I wondered if I should call his mom, but what would I tell her? That I knew her son was standing under the WTC that had just collapsed? I couldn't think, I stayed in the moment and refused to let my mind continue to spin off anxieties. I made a cup of tea very slowly and sat with my sorrow on the couch, watching the events unfold.

I am not sure how long I sat there, just breathing and waiting for the phone to ring. But it did, and he was shaken, but OK. He then walked home across the bridge as soon as the police allowed it.

Do you have a personal account you would like to share? Vigils are ongoing at Washington Square Park and Union Square. Thousands of New Yorkers have already written messages of support and peace on posters at the vigils. You can also visit our website at www.nyc.indymedia.org and share your story and analysis of these tragic events.



THE INDYPENDENT

WAYS TO HELP

DONATIONS

* The United Way of New York and the New York Community Trust fund to help the victims of the attacks and their families. Donations should be sent in care of United Way, 2 Park Ave, NYC, 10016, or call 212-251-4035 or at <http://www.uwnyc.org>. American Red Cross, cash donations: 1-800-HELP-NOW

If you are able to donate any of the items below, please deliver them to: *Chelsea Piers on Manhattan's West Side at 23rd Street and West Side Highway (11th Ave.)* Aspirin/Tylenol, Gauze, Bandages, Non-latex gloves, Surgical masks, Saline solution, Dust masks, Neosporin, Towels, blankets, T-shirts, Pens, Tape, Paper.

HOTLINES

* NYC hotline for family and friends of victims: 212-560-2730 (instead of 911)
* NYC Police Department: 718-677-8328
* New York Fire Department rescue efforts: 718-999-2541
* Port Authority employee information: 973-565-5505/5506/5507
* St. Vincent's Hospital asks for medic help: 212-604-7285
* U.S. Government family hotline: 1-800-331-0075

WEBSITES

Listing of hotlines and sites. <http://www.atenewyork.com>
For information on donating blood. <http://www.nybloodcenter.org>
For FBI tips on the attacks. <http://www.ifcfbi.gov>
For information on helping victims. <http://www.helping.org>.



Special Edition #1
September, 2001



By IMC STAFF

New York and the nation are in mourning. Families are desperately going from hospital to morgue, searching for information about missing loved ones after the World Trade Center bombings.

The mood is one of anger mixed with anxiety. Impromptu vigils were held

earlier Wednesday evening at Union Square Park and Washington Square. Calls for revenge are growing.

And the city remains filled with fear. Wednesday night shortly before 9:30 p.m. scores of pedestrians raced through the streets after a bomb scare at the Empire State Building and nearby

buildings.

Much has changed.

Officials won't announce a death toll, saying it will take weeks to tally. Nonetheless, the city has asked the federal government for 11,000 body bags, which would make Tuesday America's bloodiest day (continued on page 3)

AFTER SHOCKS

How Should We Respond?

By MIKE BURKE

Within minutes of Tuesday's horrific bombing, calls quickly came for all-out retaliation against the attackers. Peaceful solutions to the devastating terror were ignored.

"Let's Kill the Bastards" screamed the *New York Post*.

But wouldn't fighting terror with terror propel the nation, and indeed the world, into a war where there may be no winners?

Peace advocates throughout the nation have called on the Bush Administration to avoid unilateral retaliation. But their message has been largely silenced in the name of patriotism.

"I am certainly against the U.S. doing what was done to us: kill large numbers of civilians to make a political point," David McReynolds, of the War Resisters League, told the *Independent*.

Rahul Mahajan, a board director at Peace Action, urged President Bush to follow international law and work through diplomatic means to find the perpetrators and bring them to justice. "We must work with other countries to find out who did this," he said.

Mahajan went on to urge the U.S. to join with other nations and craft disarmament policies.

Stephen Zunes, a senior policy analyst at the Foreign Policy in Focus project, warned against "blind dramatic" attacks.

"In 1997, in retaliation for the terrorist attacks of two U.S. embassies in

Africa, the United States bombed a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan that supplied more than half the antibiotics and vaccines for that impoverished country," Zunes wrote. "The Clinton administration falsely claimed it was a chemical weapons plant controlled by an exiled Saudi terrorist."

Even before the U.S. government made arrests, political analysts quickly blamed fundamentalist Muslim groups for the attacks. Though this still cannot be confirmed, analysts say we must reevaluate our Middle East policy.

"Look at Iraq, we know that 3,000 children are dying each month [due to U.S.-backed sanctions] over these years and that the death toll is building. It's well over half a million and may be very near 1,000,000 children over the last 10 years and there has been little or no response," said Carmen Trotta of the War Resisters League.

Trotta and others forcefully condemned the terrorist attacks, but said the U.S. foreign policy that might have led to the attacks needs to be closely examined. "I don't think people in America have any idea how deeply America is hated in parts of the world, particularly in the Islamic world," said McReynolds. He outlined a series of actions—actions that were illegal under international law—that the U.S. has taken against nations including Libya, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq and also pointed to the U.S.'s unwavering support for Israel.

"The main practitioner of attacks that either deliberately target civilians or are so indiscriminate that it makes no difference, is no shadowy Middle Eastern terrorist, but our own government," said Mahajan. "Where was the justified rage of commentators, analysts and talking heads when the United States attacked civilians on a massive scale during the Gulf War, even referring to Basra, a city of 800,000, as a 'military target.'"

It is only by addressing these underlying causes that Americans can be sure such extreme violence will not happen again.



A New Yorker gasps in disbelief.



New York City independent media center

WHAT IS THE IMC?

With autonomous chapters in over 40 cities throughout the world, the year-old Independent Media Center has quickly grown into an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC's mission is to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues that affect us daily. We are a community-based organization using media production and distribution to support and facilitate communities' political and cultural self-representation. We seek to illuminate and analyze local and global issues impacting individuals, communities and eco-systems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate their issues to the world.

Unlike corporate media, we do not pretend to be unbiased. Subjectivity comes with the human package. Rather, we espouse open dialogue, and the importance of placing the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, and away from the drive of profit.

The IMC's work in cyberspace — please visit the local website at www.nyc.indymedia.org or the global site at www.indymedia.org for up-to-the-minute reports on actions and news near and far — features self-published stories as well as a wide sampling of photos, videos and audio clips. The New York City chapter's print publication, the *Independent*, looks to broaden the IMC's reach through the written word by literally putting the news in people's hands on NYC streets. It is funded solely by benefits, subscriptions, and individual donations from community members.

WHAT CAN I DO TO GET INVOLVED?

In aiming to tear down the walls between media producers and consumers, we encourage you to take part in this growing media (r)evolution. The options for involvement are numerous: write for the *Independent*, film events and rallies, self-publish articles to the web, take photos, etc., or just help us run the office. As an organization relying entirely on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

Stop complaining about the media and all of its shortcomings — take action by voicing your insights and analysis. If you would like to become involved, email us at imc-nyc-print@indymedia.org, call us at (212) 684-8112 for general information on the NYC IMC or visit www.nyc.indymedia.org.

SUBMISSIONS

The *Independent* seeks submissions from readers to cover news, cultural events, opinion, etc. Include contact information and be diligent in citing sources. Articles should be less than 1,200 words in length. Letters should be under 300 words. Pictures and graphics are always needed. If possible send stories via email and disc, although hard copies can also be accepted. All mail should be sent to NYC Independent Media Center, 34 E. 29th St., 2nd Floor, New York City, NYC 10016.

We also urge readers to write or email letters to the IMC for publication. Unsigned letters will not be published. The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity but please give us detailed information on how we can contact you to review edits. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

CONTRIBUTORS: Joshua Breitbart, Mike Burke, Matt Capri, Simon Finger, Sarah Groff-Palermo, A.K. Gupta, Heather Haddon, Ana Nogueira, John Tarleton

RISING HATRED

BY HEATHER HADDON AND JASON STELLA

Disturbing is a word that barely describes the September 11 bombings for most New Yorkers. But it is the word Mohammed Abdur Rahman, an Arab-American resident of Queens, uses to describe death threats left on his Islamic Center's answering machine.

"I hope you have fun with Satan and in eternal hell fire for a thousand millenniums because that is where you're going to be," said the first of two messages left just hours after the Tower buildings fell.

"We are just looking for peace," Rahman says of his community's reaction to the attacks on the U.S. as well as its own sense of well-being. Rahman, a pastor, is originally from Bangladesh.

Rahman and other Arab and Muslim-Americans are now bracing for more than just verbal hostilities. Because Islamic fundamentalist groups were the first — and still only — possible culprits cited by media sources and the Bush administration, racial hatred is beginning to brew in an angered and outraged country.

"We are telling Muslims to focus on helping the victims in whatever way possi-



Oakland youth react to the racism.

try," characterizes "the scary tone" of the harassment, says Salaam.

"Lots of hate emails are coming in in reaction to the TV scenes of Palestinians dancing in the streets over the bombing," says Salaam. One message stated: "Your slimy brothers celebrating over there

will have your time to die too." To combat this hatred locally, Mayor Giuliani called for additional police support in Arab-American areas, emphasizing that as a city, "We are not going to participate in group blame or group hatred." Approximately 450,000 Muslims live in New York City. A total of 7 million Muslims live in the United States.

While Rahman, and other Arab-American New Yorkers, agreed that the police had responded to their threats, racist sentiments could still be heard on the streets of Long Island City in Queens. "Bomb 'em. Bomb the fuck out of 'em," said a man Wednesday afternoon as he walked outside a Bangladeshi-owned deli.

Incidents include gunfire at a mosque in Texas, two Muslim-owned buildings lit on fire in Maryland, and other accounts of property vandalism. At the University of Austin, Muslim students have had their baggage searched and meetings in their student union broken up.

Additionally, CAIR has logged hundreds of accounts of verbal and Internet harassment. "It's time for Arabs and Muslims to be punished, to leave the coun-

MEDIA GOES TO WAR

BY JOHN TARLETON AND MARY ANN THOMPSON

Since Tuesday Americans have been inundated with a nearly unprecedented barrage of patriotic propaganda, says one of the nation's leading media critics.

"It's moments like these that press coverage is almost always the worst," Robert McChesney told the *Independent* on Wednesday. "Because this is an issue of international politics where press coverage tends to just mirror elite opinion with no qualifications, no domestic interference. It's a moment like this that is so emotional. Who can't be struck by the savagery of something like this? To raise a dissident voice earmarks someone as uncaring."

McChesney is a professor at the Institute of Communications Research at the University of Illinois and author of *Rich Media, Poor Democracy, Communication Politics in Dubious Times* and *It's the Media Stupid*.

McChesney says that public anger is being manipulated by the choice and repetition of certain images and voices. The mainstream media set certain limits on the range of analysis deemed acceptable as well as the conclusions to be drawn from this analysis. A parade of former high US officials—Henry Kissinger, Madeline Albright, Alexander Haig, George Schultz, Norman Schwartzkopf, Richard Holbrooke, et. al.—march across screens stations in close formation.

"What's only mentioned infrequently

is that so-called 'experts' always have a background, an agenda. They are not neutral do-gooders," McChesney said. "...Being a terrorism expert in America means never having to say you're sorry. Without exception, their definition of terror is restricted to enemies of the United States government. The United States' role in the world is rarely mentioned and likewise its definition of terrorism is strictly off limits. It leaves viewers and readers with a bizarre idea of how the world works. An almost incomprehensible view."

Chest thumping editorials have filled the nation's op-ed pages and notions of restraint are hard to find. "I heard no one saying that violence breeds violence and that a massive retaliation may only invite more of the same," said Danny Schechter, a former network television producer who founded mediachannel.org.

Hours after the attacks, the FBI began asking Internet providers to install Carnivore technology to monitor all email transmissions. And, a growing chorus of Congressional voices is calling for hefty increases to the current \$328 billion-per-year military budget.

"Whenever you see this much coverage pointing in one direction, you should always feel for your wallet and head in the other direction," McChesney said. "When it's this much of a barrage, then it's almost without exception going to be pure propaganda."

Looking For A Different Point Of View?

Independent Media Center
www.nyc.indymedia.org

Z Magazine
www.zmag.org/ZNET.htm

WBAI in Exile
www.wbix.org

Counterpunch
www.counterpunch.org

KPFA
www.kpfa.org

Common Dreams NewsCenter
www.commondreams.org

Alternet
www.alternet.org

Guardian
www.guardian.co.uk

We Need Real Security

A.K. GUPTA
News Analysis

"Worse than Pearl Harbor" is not an overstatement. Many thousands are dead and injured, including heroic emergency service personnel who lost their lives while trying to rescue others.

As with Pearl Harbor, there is a sense of a loss of innocence. It can't happen here, but it has.

There was a Hollywood air about the attack, the already familiar image of a jetliner plowing into the South Tower and exploding in a fireball. But unlike the movies, Sylvester Stallone or Bruce Willis didn't come to our rescue. And the Pentagon, FBI and CIA couldn't protect us either.

The pall of smoke hanging over New York City is mingled with fear and uncertainty. Who committed this barbaric act, everyone's asking, and what will happen now?

The calls for revenge will grow in the days ahead as the innocent victims are buried.

Osama bin Laden is being fingered by many as the architect of this barbaric act. But some say the Saudi millionaire is a "paper tiger," noting he's been under such close watch by U.S. intelligence that it would be extremely difficult for him to mount an attack.



A Brooklyn F train rider holds one of the countless pieces of charred paper that blew across the city.

Speculation is running rampant: Syria, Iraq, Iran, Libya and Afghanistan are also being put forth as possible suspects. Others are blaming "Arab terror" or Muslims in general.

We may never really know who's responsible, but it's a given the U.S. mili-

tary response will be massive.

However, before cheering our own bombs and missiles, we need to understand why this happened so we can prevent future attacks.

These monstrous acts are unjustifiable, though hardly surprising. Over much of the last century, we've bombed numerous countries, propped up dictatorships and overthrown popularly elected governments. We've gradually earned the enmity of much of the world.

Following the 1979 seizure of the American Embassy in Iran by Islamic militants, there were cries to bomb Iran back to the Stone Age. Why the Iranians might be so angry was given scant attention. Even today, few Americans know the CIA toppled Iran's democratically elected government in 1953 because it had nationalized its oil industry. Washington then installed the autocratic Shah, and trained and financed his regime's secret police, which tortured and killed thousands of Iranians over the years.

More recently, we've bombed Lebanon, Grenada, Libya, Central America, Panama, Sudan, Serbia, Afghanistan and Colombia. We backed Iraq's invasion of Iran, which claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. We continue to wage war against Iraq 10 years after the Gulf War ended, causing over 1

million deaths with our debilitating sanctions. And we fund Israel's illegal and violent occupation of Palestinian lands.

Latin America is sadly familiar with our meddling, along with many countries in Africa and Asia. There's hardly a corner of the world where we haven't tried to play globo-cop.

More of the same is not the answer. We

might find the perpetrators and bring them to justice, but we're likely to kill many thousands of innocent civilians in the process.

When U.S. embassies were bombed in Africa in 1998, Sudan and Afghanistan were quickly identified as being responsi-

out, many have donned masks to filter out the dust that lingers in the air. The silence is punctuated only by the sirens of emergency vehicles rushing about.

Mayor Rudy Giuliani maintains the city is open for business, but commuters still fear venturing back into the city.

The need to identify an enemy has led many to jump to conclusions. Militant Islamic groups known for their suicide bombings have been fingered by many as the culprits, though to date no one has been formally charged with any crime.

Some Americans are expressing their rage (see "Rising Hatred," opposite page) by assaulting anyone thought to be from the Middle East or Muslim. But many



Smoke rolls up the canyons of NYC.

ble. A flurry of cruise missiles followed. When the dust cleared, a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan was destroyed that supplied much of the country's life-saving drugs. This damaged our security by angering ordinary Sudanese.

Adopting a war footing now will not enhance our security, but just spawn more terror attacks.

We can bomb any country we want — even nuke them. We can also build a National Missile Defense, as the Pentagon wants. But how can we ever protect ourselves against people willing to turn themselves into human bombs?

Our search for security must begin elsewhere. Demonizing groups of people at home or abroad is not the answer, but a recipe for further conflict. There have been numerous reports of attacks on people thought to be Arab or Muslim. What do we gain by attacking innocents, but the self-destruction of our own freedoms?

We'll be called on to rally around the flag and president in the coming days, and support whatever retribution is carried out. Our security would be better enhanced by using this time of grief and mourning to reconsider our position in the world and use reason — not bombs — to solve our problems.

more are criticizing any attempt to punish a whole people for crimes thought to be committed by a few.



The news in Times Square, under the watchful eye of Arnold Schwarzenegger. (still fom video)

TIMELINE OF LOST LIBERTY

"History teaches that grave threats to liberty often come in times of urgency, when constitutional rights seem too extravagant to endure."

— Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, 1989

1901 — Soon after the assassination of President William McKinley by Czech anarchist Leon Czolgosz on September 3, 1901, the U.S. government passes the Anarchist Exclusion Act to bar radicals from entering the country.

1918 — To combat anti-war protests, the nation passes the Sedition, Espionage and Alien Acts which allows the U.S. to squelch dissent and deport foreign-born radicals. Two years later thousands of immigrants are rounded up and deported as part of the Palmer raids. During the height of anti-immigrant sentiment, Sacco and Vanzetti, two Italian anarchists, were falsely arrested and convicted for a murder in Massachusetts. In 1927 they were executed.

1940 — Following the outbreak of World War II, Congress passes the Alien Registration Act making it illegal to advocate, abet, or teach the desirability of overthrowing the U.S. government. All adult foreigners are required to complete statements stating personal and occupational information, as well as political beliefs.

1942 — After the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the U.S. government rounds up 120,000 Japanese Americans and places them in internment camps for two years. In some cases, German and Italian immigrants are also held in camps.

1947 — President Truman issues the Loyalty Oath, mandating all federal employees pledge allegiance to the U.S. government.

1950 — A massive anti-communist campaign peaks with the McCarthy hearings.

1956 — FBI begins COINTELPRO a secret governmental campaign to infiltrate, watch and disable political dissidents. During the 1960s and 1970s, the program tracked the anti-war movement, civil rights leaders, Black Panthers and other black nationalist groups, Puerto Rican nationalists and the American Indian Movement.

1987 — Federal officials arrest students activists—seven Palestinians and a Kenyan—under the McCarthy-era McCarran-Walter Act. They are arraigned on charges of advocating world communism and involvement in a pro-Palestinian group. The U.S. government continues today to try to deport members of the "LA8," though they have never been convicted.

1996 — Ten weeks after the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City, President Clinton issues an anti-terrorism executive order, later the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act. Although right-wing U.S. terrorists were known to have orchestrated the bombing, the Act focused almost entirely on foreigners. The law allows secret evidence to be used to hold suspected terrorists. U.S. immigration has been given the power to hold immigrant suspects indefinitely, even without a court hearing. And U.S. citizens are barred from donating to several "terrorist" organiza-